

THE CONCEPTUAL PLAN

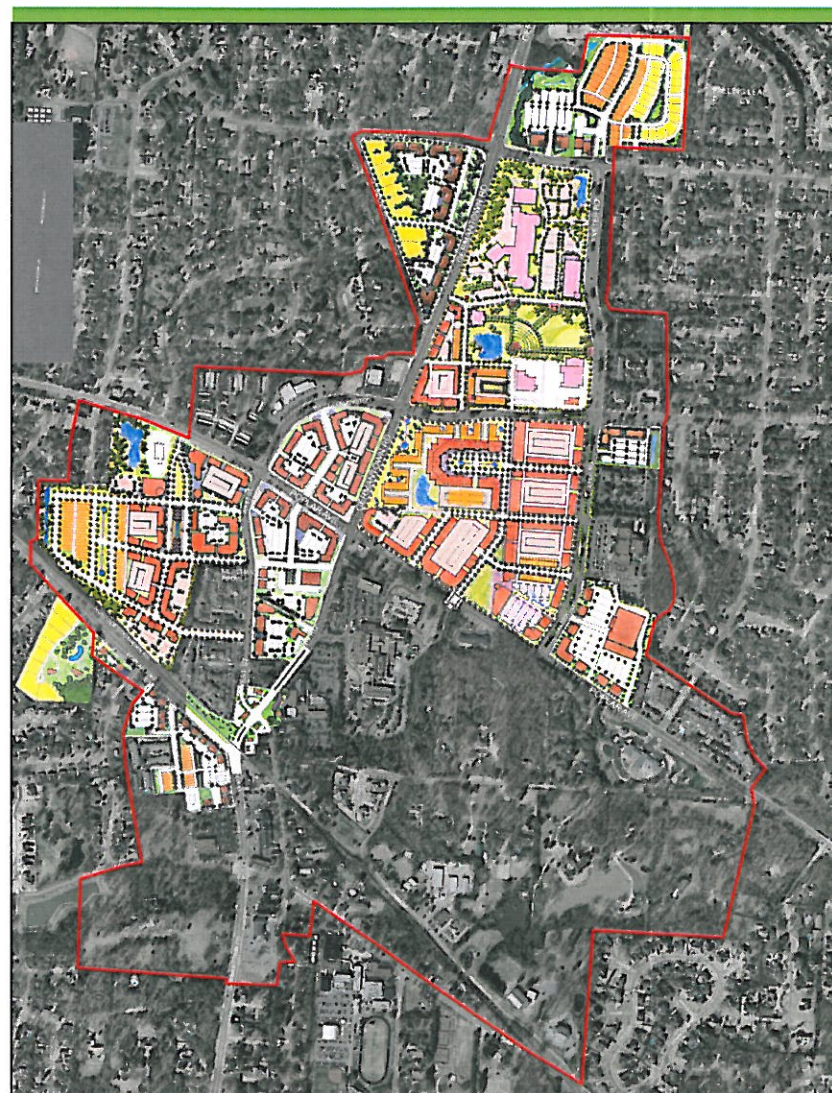
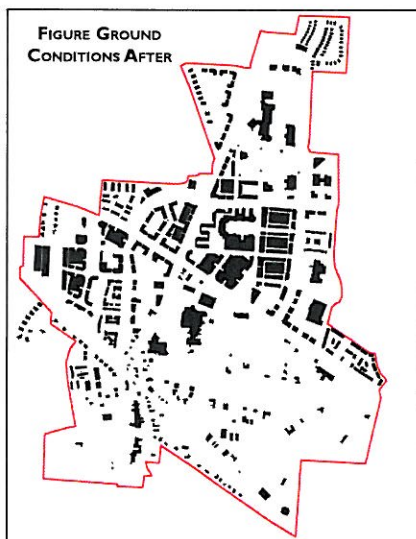
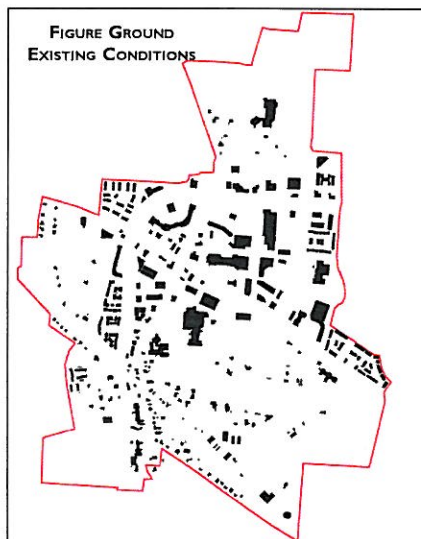
Overview
The Superblock
The Municipal Block
Town Center West
Owen Tract
Kroger Block
Saddle Creek-Hardware Block
Dogwood Road
Infill Opportunities

The plans shown throughout the report represent conceptual build-out scenarios for the study area. When envisioning these development alternatives, the plan considers existing property boundaries, ownership rights, and potential consolidation of parcels. The illustrated map at right conveys the preferred build-out alternative for the plan area and is not intended to preclude site-specific modifications.

The plan assumes that such modifications will occur. However, these will be directed according to specific programmatic and market analysis tools developed for each site as needed and when the appropriate conditions/motivations exist. Nonetheless, the following recommendation elements should be retained in future planning efforts:

- General intensity of development
- Urban pattern (i.e. relationship to street and adjacent properties)
- Massing (Size of buildings)
- Street and pedestrian circulation patterns
- Open space protection

Therefore, the purpose the conceptual plan is not to require strict conformance to each building as drawn, but to show general patterns and intensities. Development petitions are expected to maintain the general street network, preserve future street connections and rights-of-way, protect regional open space areas, provide usable public spaces, and mix uses both horizontally and vertically.



Smart Growth Plan conceptual build-out across entire study area

The central commercial block is located in the heart of the study area. Bound by Exeter and Germantown Roads to the east and west, and Farmington Boulevard and Poplar Avenue to the north and south, this "superblock" contains a significant proportion of Germantown's commercial investment. In fact, this particular block contains several of the City's larger retail establishments, such as Germantown Village Square, Schnuck's grocer, and the Hobby Lobby shopping center. Because of the block's central location and existing conditions, it presents many redevelopment opportunities essential to the success of the Smart Growth Plan.

During the charrette process, numerous citizens and officials criticized the tired, worn out appearance of several buildings on the block, notably the Hobby Lobby site. Like other parts of the block, under-used parking lots surround Hobby Lobby, creating an unpleasant environment perceived as neglected and dis-invested. Some suggested that the City "break up the superblock" into smaller, more traditional urban blocks to improve access and become more pedestrian-friendly. Furthermore, participants desired to see new retail, dining, and residential options in the City's central area. In fact, citizens pointed out that Germantown lacks "quality mixed-use, high-density development" in the plan area.

In addition, City officials and citizens voiced their desires for a "sense of place" in the City's center, with destinations and spaces which residents and visitors alike could identify as unique to Germantown. Some even advocated for a focal point such as a "town square," as well as "more greenery" in public spaces.

With these comments in mind, this plan considers the central commercial superblock as a candidate for potential redesign and redevelopment opportunities. No one project will re-invigorate this area. Rather, the solution will require an economically balanced combination of uses and good urban design. Ultimately, the vision for the central superblock involves the creation of a true town center, a mixed-use environment with multiple uses and destinations. As such, the plan creates the framework to incorporate attractive residential, commercial, and cultural opportunities in the study area.

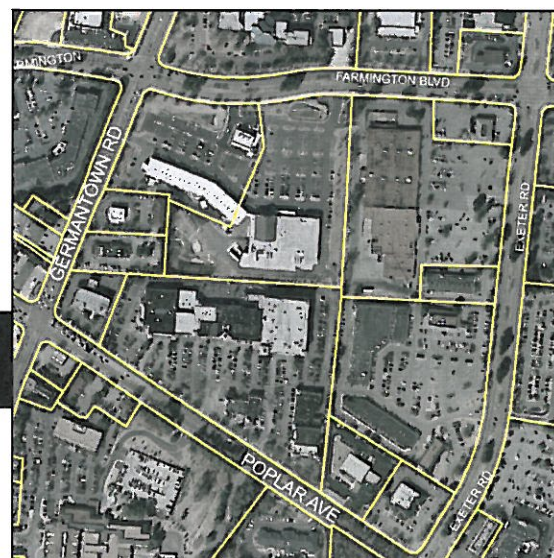
The following proposals represent a conceptual plan based upon the publicly-driven charrette process. Suggestions and ideas gleaned through this process apply to a wide range of sites within the superblock and within the overall study area. These plans reflect potential build-out scenarios executed through various projects over the course of several years.

What is Mixed-Use?

- Three or more significant revenue-producing, mutually supporting uses clustered together in order to maximize development potential and buildable land area.
- A relatively close-knit and intensive land-use pattern that physically and functionally integrates varied uses and non-motorized mobility.
- Development in conformance with a coherent plan, which frequently stipulates the type and scale of uses, permitted densities, and related items.
- A vertical mixing of project components within one building, a series of buildings, or throughout an urban landscape, such as a City block.
- Careful positioning of key civic features around central public spaces (for example, a fountain, street, park, plaza, atrium, galleria, or shopping center).
- Interconnection of uses through pedestrian-friendly pathways (including sidewalks, along streets, interior walkways, enclosed corridors and concourses, retail plazas, etc.)
- The sharing of facilities by compatible uses (i.e. parking used for office space during the day accommodates residential needs after the workday ends).

~ Urban Land Institute, 2003

Super Block by Numbers	Existing Conditions	Proposed Town Center
Retail	346,361 sq. ft.	450,000 sq. ft.
Office	298,639 sq. ft.	530,000 sq. ft.
Residential	-	770 apartments/condos
Other Features	Interconnected parking lots	New Main Street; Increased residential diversity and capacity; Urban neighborhood, town center; public space/plazas/fountains

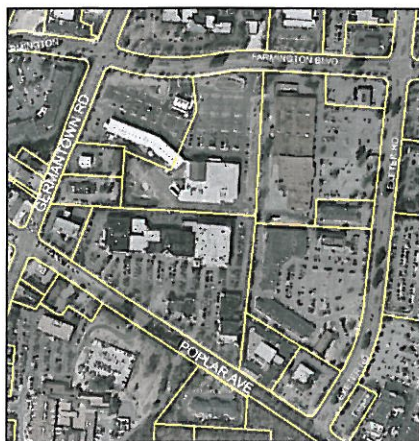


Existing Conditions

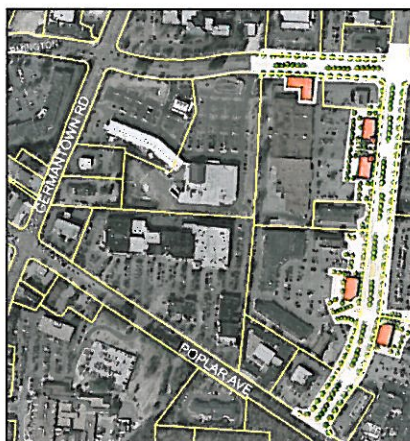


Final Build-Out

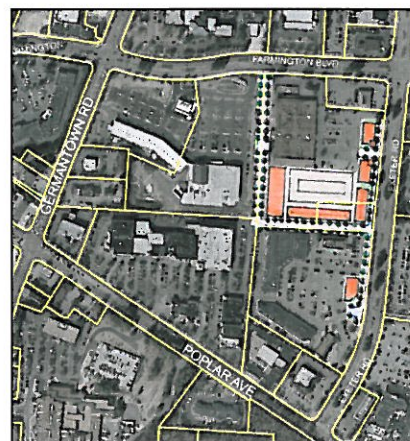
Phased Implementation of the Mixed-Use Center



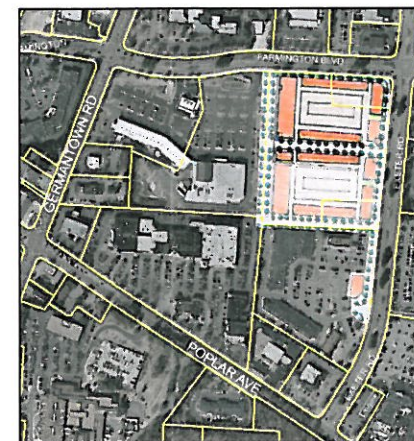
Existing Conditions



Phase 1: Out-parcel development along Exeter and Farmington Roads plus street improvements



Phase 2: Mixed-use buildings on new connector streets



Phase 3: Complete Hobby Lobby redevelopment & mixed-use on Farmington



Phase 4: Continue mixed-use out-parcels along Exeter & add new street plus townhomes



Phase 5: Connect Farmington to Poplar, with new Main Street, develop public spaces & increase mixed-use development



Phase 6: Connect all streets, develop focal public spaces & increase mixed-use/housing diversity



Final Build-Out

THE SUPERBLOCK: PHASE I

Phase 1 projects represent smaller, momentum-generating initiatives that the City can use to begin redevelopment on the Superblock. These proposals are easily doable and involve relatively low cost; they require a blend of public and private investment, with different sectors taking the lead on different projects.

■ **Encourage out-parcel development over empty surface parking lots.** The excessive parking infrastructure surrounding many buildings affords the opportunity for on-site, out-parcel development. The Hobby-Lobby site at the corner of Farmington and Exeter roads offers the best chance for such implementation. Due to its large, under-utilized parking lot, the site can easily accommodate the development of several new out-parcel buildings. This plan recommends that multi-story buildings (2-3 stories) be placed directly alongside Farmington and Exeter Roads so as to create a stronger street presence along these corridors. With ample surface parking already in place, the new buildings may effectively share parking spaces with existing stores (and attract more customers, too). This strategy effectively minimizes total infrastructure costs while generating profit for property owners and tax revenue for the City. Other suitable locations for out-parcels include Germantown Plaza, Exeter Village, and Kroger parking lots.

■ **Add on-street parking along Exeter Road.** Currently, Exeter's traffic capacity far exceeds its current or projected volumes. Striping the outside lane for on-street parking on each side allows the roadway to handle current and projected volumes while simultaneously using existing space to support new frontage developments on out-parcels. On-street parking encourages vehicles to travel at lower speeds and provides a safety buffer for pedestrians on the sidewalk. Rather than a single-use traffic conduit, the road becomes a local destination lined with attractive, accessible uses. These features, combined with pedestrian-oriented buildings that mix uses, generate a synergy currently non-existent along the auto-dominated roadway.

■ **Gather all Superblock property owners and stakeholders together.** Several owners and tenants have begun to meet and discuss particular development strategies. By congregating the key players, the City may build consensus regarding the superblock's future. It may even prove valuable to form an *ad hoc* committee to assist and support these public/private efforts.

Opportunities for mixed-use, out-parcel development along Exeter Road

Existing conditions: Under-utilized parking surfaces



Proposed out-parcel development along Exeter Road



Existing conditions: Under-utilized parking lots



A rendering of street-fronting buildings along Exeter Road



A multi-purpose, pedestrian-friendly street in a mixed-use village (Birkdale Village, Huntersville, NC)

THE SUPERBLOCK: PHASE 2

Phase 2 describes the more comprehensive redevelopment of the Hobby Lobby property. Because of its relative age, this shopping center offers the most potential for redevelopment within the superblock and should be considered the top priority.

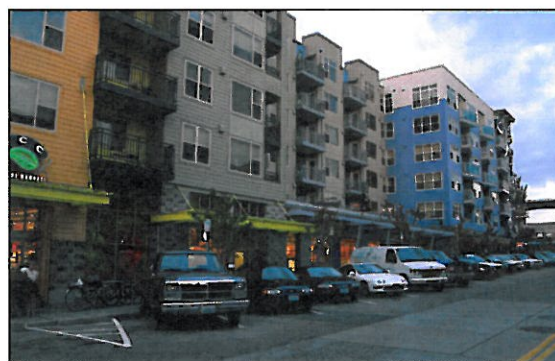
- **Create a new L-shaped connector street joining Exeter and Farmington Roads.** This street would serve many different purposes, particularly providing frontage to new commercial and mixed-use development and enhanced connectivity through the superblock by setting up the beginnings of a traditional block structure. Shoppers and residents could use the connector street to travel to and through the block by car or on foot. The street design should complement the improved Exeter Road, meaning that on-street parking should be provided to slow traffic and allow easy access to buildings. Other features, such as street trees and wide sidewalks, will further enhance the multi-purpose appeal of the street and its functions. The north-south leg of this new street establishes the outline of the future Main Street.

- **Incorporate mixed-use development into new block design.** The creation of the new street provides abundant opportunities for mixed-use, street-fronting development. The plan recommends such development, which is critical in establishing the new, improved urban form. As a result, building heights of 4-8 stories are contextually appropriate and help to establish the area as a town center. These building heights reflect the objectives of the Vision 2020 Plan's Goal #7, which specifically envisions "Mixed-use development in the City's core"; "People living in lofts, above-business and in townhouses"; and "Mid-rise buildings with mixed uses that are attractive and inviting for people." For definitions and examples of mixed-use development as envisaged for this central superblock, see p.28 of this report.

- **Address increased demand for parking in new development.** Increased density creates a concurrent demand for parking, which can be best addressed by constructing a parking deck. The deck should be internal to the block, located behind the mixed-use structures and screened by them from the street. By concealing the deck in this way, the streets retain their urbanity and pedestrian appeal. Potential funding strategies include the creation of a special TIF (Tax Increment Financing) district. This tax measure raises the necessary funds through a local bond issued to support the project. Once the project is complete, the City recoups the costs through the additional tax revenues generated by the development's increasing value. It is possible that the proposed Farmington-Exeter street connection could be added onto this particular bond.



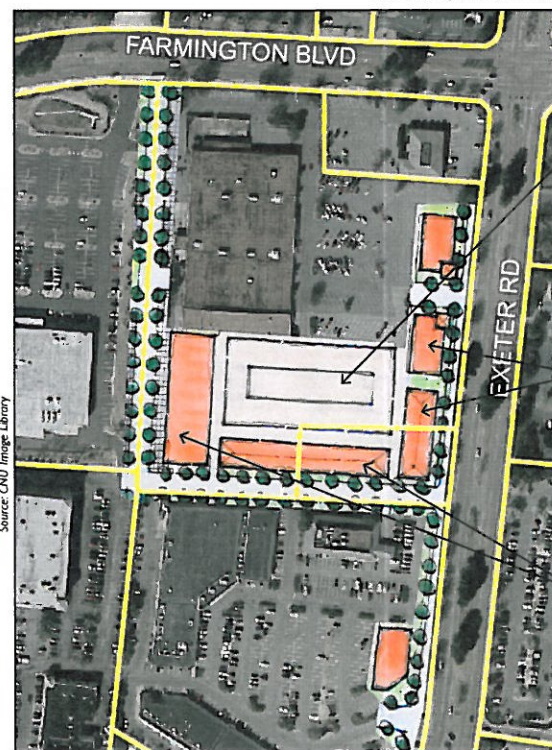
Low-speed connector street, Legacy Village, Kansas City, MO



Mixed-use block with reverse-angle parking along connector street



Parking deck hidden behind stores and residences in a mixed-use development
Birkdale Village, Huntersville, NC



Phase 2: Parking deck & mixed-use buildings

THE SUPERBLOCK: PHASE 3

Phase 3 effectively completes redevelopment of the commercial core's northeast quadrant. At this stage, it is assumed that lease cycles for existing buildings have expired and that the property is entirely available for redevelopment. With that said, the plan recommends the following:

- **Complete redevelopment of Hobby Lobby building.** This structure, among the oldest on the block, occupies the largest land area yet provides for only one use: retail. The creation of the Farmington-Exeter connector street opens up the building's rear side for on-street commercial ventures (retail, dining, and office spaces). Therefore, the plan recommends the redevelopment of the Hobby Lobby building in both use and height. Keeping with the block's emerging urban form, heights may vary anywhere from 3-8 stories depending on location and context. This allows for the inclusion of residential spaces above the other uses and helps to achieve a vibrant, 18-hour environment in which people come and go throughout all hours of the day.

- **Mixed-use infill along Farmington.** To complement the Hobby Lobby conversion, the plan encourages mixed-use infill development along Farmington and at the corner of Farmington and Exeter roads. These buildings will further solidify the block's urban form while creating a strong street presence that offers a safe environment for pedestrians and competitive retail/office space.

- **Add mid-block connector street with mixed-use buildings.** The creation of a new mid-block street from Exeter to the potential new Main Street improves connectivity within the area for all users by further breaking down block size. On-street parking increases the block's capacity to meet density requirements and allows patrons to park directly in front of their destination. In addition, the multipurpose street facilitates walking between destinations on the block, effectively breaking up the enormous, car-dominated "superblock" described by citizens.

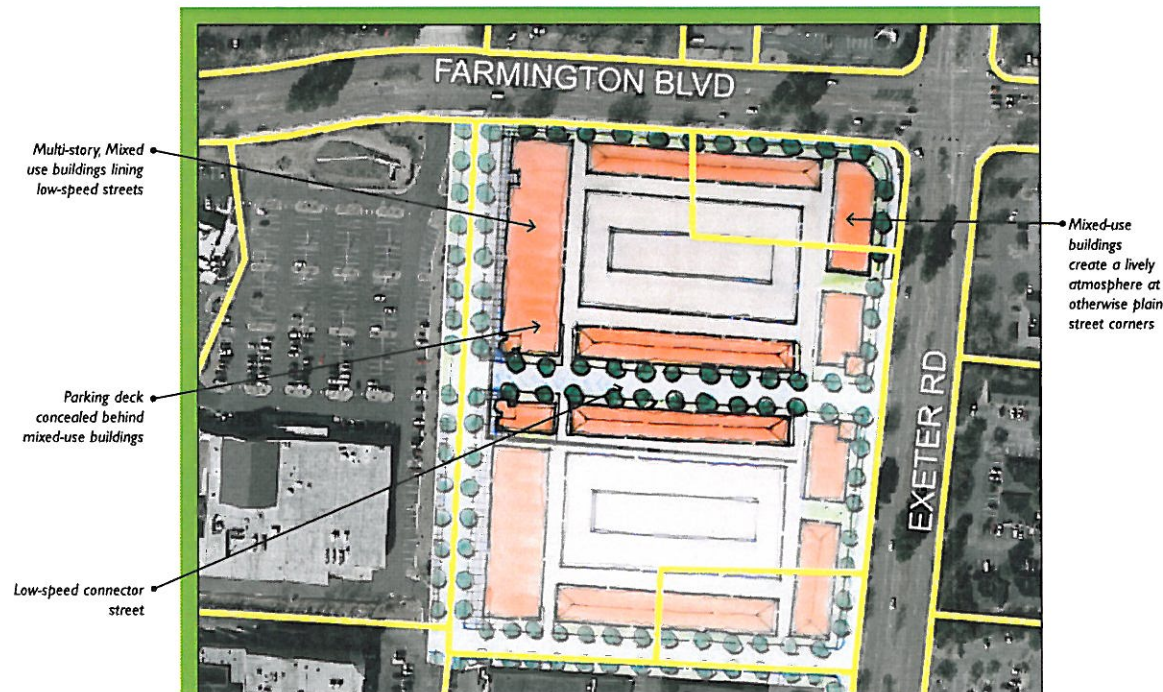
- **Include parking deck.** An additional parking deck of similar design to the one described in Phase 2 will fulfill parking needs while the new mixed-use buildings built to screen the deck from view will increase street presence and help sustain a vibrant commercial environment.



Mixed-use corner development, Zona Rosa, Kansas City, MO



Multi-story buildings with a strong corner presence, Huntersville, NC



Phase 3: Mixed-use infill & parking additions

THE SUPERBLOCK: PHASE 4

Phase 4 continues the redevelopment pattern established in Phase 3. There are a few changes to note, however. The following recommendations focus on the Exeter Village shopping area (the block's southeast corner), adjacent to the Hobby Lobby site.

- **Develop mid-block connector street with townhomes.** This additional infrastructure embodies the same principles as the other mid-block streets yet provides a different set of housing options. The townhomes (shown in lighter orange) along the street provide for an urban residential feel with affordable ownership opportunities. For example, young couples or families unable to afford a single-family house in Germantown may still live in the City while building up equity to purchase a larger home. These benefits also apply to empty-nesters or retirees looking to downsize. The proximity to amenities such as the town hall, post office, library and grocery stores allows people to walk to their everyday destinations. This entails many benefits for residents and the City, including reduced traffic on congested roadways and the incorporation of exercise into citizens' daily routines.

- **Continue mixed-use infill along Exeter Road and newly constructed streets.** The addition of street-fronting buildings on what are now empty parking lots adjacent to the new mid-block streets and Exeter Road will further shape the character of those multi-purpose streets. These buildings provide a visual presence on the streets, helping to identify them as places that perform other functions in addition to moving vehicles (i.e. retail and dining/entertainment, office uses, and general recreation: walking). Complementary improvements on Exeter Road, such as on-street parking, bike lanes, and wide sidewalks, increase the access and visibility of businesses located on that street and enhance the area's urban appeal.

- **Meet parking capacity needs.** With the continued redevelopment of the existing surface lots, new parking facilities will need to be constructed to keep pace with development. Again, on-street parking on Exeter Road and the newly proposed connector street will meet some of the demand, and a parking deck internal to the newly-formed block would provide the extra capacity needed and the new "liner" buildings constructed to screen the deck from view will enhance the urban character created by the street-facing mixed-use and residential buildings.



Urban apartments with on-street parking, Vancouver, BC



Urban residential streetscape, Addison, TX



Multi-story urban townhomes in Charlotte, NC



On-street parking bays provide additional capacity and safety for pedestrians, FL



Phase 4: Add parking, mixed-use buildings, and townhomes (shown in bright orange)

THE SUPERBLOCK: PHASE 5

These two final phases together cover more than half the total site area of the original superblock and thus play a vital role in completing the pattern of urban transformation established by the earlier stages of redevelopment. Because of their size and their level of economic performance, they have been left until late in the redevelopment sequence, but they do represent the largest economic opportunities within the superblock.

The southwest corner of the superblock represents a critical piece to the overall coherence of the central core. Lining the major thoroughfares of Poplar Ave. and Germantown Rd., the block has high visibility and contains Germantown's Village Square Center and other retailers. The following proposals aim to enhance this portion of the central superblock as a focal point in the City:

- **Complete new Main Street by extending the north-south segment of the Farmington-Exeter connector street to Poplar Avenue.** By connecting Poplar Avenue to Farmington, the new Main Street serves as a mid-block spine for the central core. People may now move throughout the central area on car, foot, or bike without being unnecessarily exposed to dangerous, large roads and their associated hazards. The new street is turned at its southern end to line up with an improved entrance for vehicles and pedestrians to the hospital on the south side of Poplar Avenue, and prompts a redesign of that junction to facilitate pedestrian crossing of the busy highway (see p. 28).

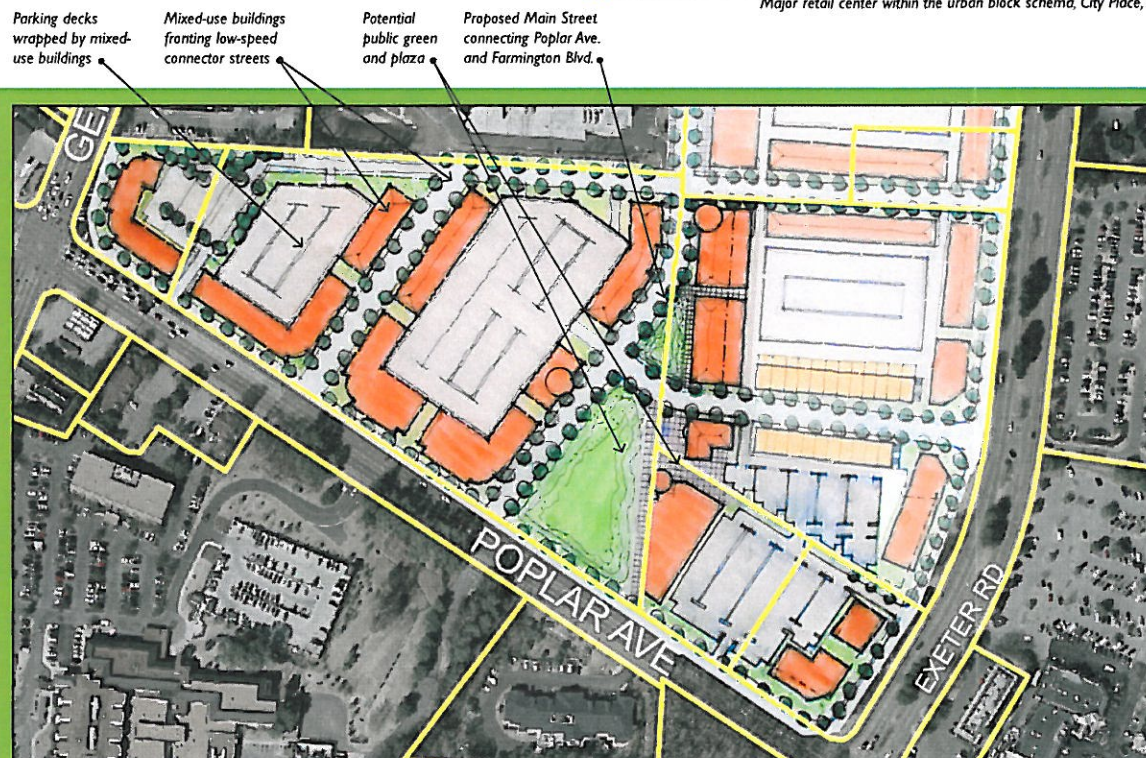
To complete the well-connected urban framework necessary for an efficient and attractive town center, all the east-west streets on the new street grid that dissects the former superblock should be connected to the north-south spine of Main Street. A triangular public park can be constructed in this location as the southern terminus of Main Street and as a focal point for the southern part of the redeveloped superblock. Surrounded by mixed-use buildings with restaurants, stores, offices and apartments, this village green also creates a welcoming entrance feature for pedestrians (hospital staff and visitors) crossing from the hospital complex on their way to lunch, to shop or just to relax in the new town center.

- **Continue the block pattern redevelopment.** The redevelopment for this quadrant should follow the urban design parameters set by earlier phases, whereby parking decks to meet the increased parking demand are screened by mid-rise, mixed-use buildings with street level commercial space and offices and/or apartments above. These buildings should always front onto the new streets laid out in a traditional City block structure. Each street should include on-street parking, wide sidewalks, and crosswalks so as to continually improve the overall urban ambience of the new center.

As redevelopment extends across the whole site, the corner at Germantown Road and Poplar Avenue presents a special opportunity to create an urban building at this intersection that can act as a fitting symbol for the whole urban improvement of the core.



Major retail center within the urban block schema, City Place, FL



Phase 5: Complete new Main Street, develop public spaces, solidify block structure

THE SUPERBLOCK: PHASE 6

In some cases, developers should construct mixed-use buildings on a larger scale and Phase 6, the eventual redevelopment of the Schnuck's grocery site, represents the best opportunity to achieve this in a manner that completes and enhances the urban transformation of the old core area. These larger buildings are able to attract significant regional or national companies that can contribute substantially to the City's tax base. Potential tenants include bookstores, clothing retailers, movie theaters, and a grocery such as Schnuck's, redeveloped from its suburban format to fit into the changing urban framework. Within this urban context, building heights may range anywhere from 4-10 stories, depending on location. Some buildings may house only commercial use (such as a movie theater), while others may combine commercial uses on the bottom floors with residential units above.

■ Establish public space, entranceways, and visual corridors.

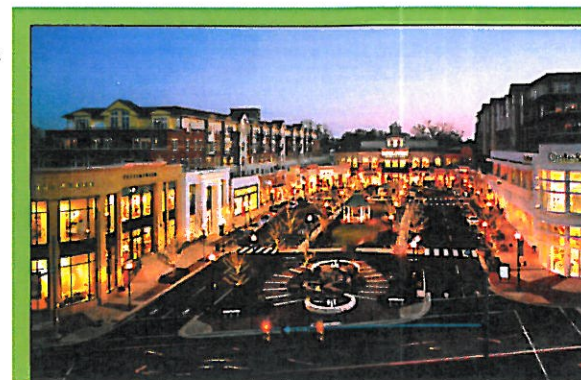
Well-designed public spaces provide both residents and visitors alike with a strong sense of place and identity. Cultural amenities such as parks, plazas, village greens, water features and public art all serve to heighten people's personal connections with a particular area. Citizens have voiced their desire for an identifiable town center; several comments stated that Germantown lacks a "public realm" or "usable public space/places to gather". Others recommended that the City create places that are more pedestrian-friendly, conducive to formal gatherings, and contain features such as public art and fountains. Coordinating public spaces with street corridors and visual terminations creates memorable vistas, especially when such points are reserved for civic purposes (statues, plazas, etc.) Together, these features help to define and celebrate an area as part of the public realm. It is very important that all these public spaces function as "outdoor rooms," that is, they are clearly defined and enclosed on their edges by buildings, acting as "walls" to the "room."

The new park at the south end of Main Street is one such focal space; Main Street itself is another, and the redevelopment of the Schnuck's site provides the opportunity for the third and most important public space in this hierarchy. In this location a new public plaza can be designed at the termination of the mid-block street created as part of Phase 3 and as a lateral extension of Main Street. This would provide the setting for the larger stores and businesses, supported by a large, screened parking deck, and a place for ceremonial public gatherings. As an important part of this redevelopment, additional housing can be provided as townhomes arranged around a series of courtyards fronting onto but set back from Germantown and Farmington Roads, and in a mid-rise apartment building constructed above the parking deck. This residential building would act as a landmark for the redeveloped downtown area.

■ Increase housing diversity for increased economic activity.

In addition to mixed-use buildings, this block and ones in previous phases afford many opportunities for a variety of different types of housing, including urban townhomes, apartments, and condominiums. These residences provide a substantial population to patronize the establishments, especially during the evening hours, as well as some housing options affordable by young families and professionals (teachers, nurses, etc), or downsized-residences for empty-nesters or retirees. These demographic groups are increasingly looking for more urban lifestyle options not currently available in Germantown. These market sectors add to the vibrancy of the town center's atmosphere and further establishes its sense of place.

■ **Provide Parking, Parking, Parking.** To accommodate the kind of growth necessary to achieve the City's objectives as set out in Goal #7 of the 2020 Plan, various improved parking measures are needed. First, on-street parking should be available on all streets throughout the redeveloped superblock. Second, concealed parking decks fit well behind multi-story, mixed-use buildings and provide increased capacity without taking up valuable street space. Third, small surface lots may be most appropriate in relation to the kind of townhome development envisaged in Phase 6.



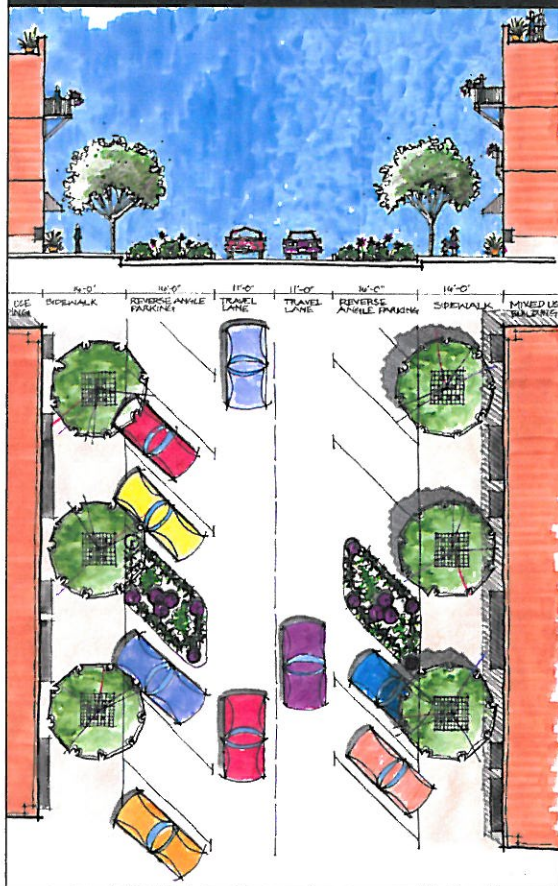
Market Common, Clarendon, VA

Mixed-use buildings housing retail, residential, and entertainment options



Phase 6: Increase density and parking capacities, develop public spaces and entertainment options

Proposed New Main St. Street Section



Proposed Main Street



Fountain, City Place, FL



Mixed-use street, Seattle, WA



Plaza with mixed-use buildings, OR



Mixed-use street, FL



A view of the proposed new Main Street looking North

GERMANTOWN
SMART
GROWTH
PLAN

SUPERBLOCK: NEW MAIN STREET

THE SUPERBLOCK: PHASE 6

On this page, images from historic and new urban areas from across the U.S. illustrate the balance of housing, parking, and mobility choices available in downtown areas. The proposed Main Street (previous page) features all the necessary elements of a vibrant downtown: Mixed-uses, higher-densities, public spaces, functional aesthetics, public art, and a vibrant pedestrian atmosphere.



Already a focal point in Germantown, the municipal block affords several opportunities to improve community amenities. Building upon the character of the Superblock, this plan considers two different development options. Both alternative scenarios deal with improving east-west connectivity across the site for pedestrians and vehicles, enhancing the park layout and facilities, increasing the quality of public space, and using portions of the surface parking area of the GPAC for “urban outparcel” development. (Because the performing arts center needs the full amount of parking only for special events, a portion of this existing parking could be re-designed to meet day-to-day needs more efficiently, with parking distributed in other, potentially more useful locations).

Option A

■ **Improve parking arrangements.** Moving the entrance road to the site from Germantown Road to the south, curving around the north end of the small lake, more than doubles the size of the parking lot on the west side of the GPAC by taking over the site of the tennis courts. This parking can better serve the needs of the facilities in the southern portion of the arts centre, together with entrances on the east side of the arts center by means of improved street and sidewalk access across the site. The courts are relocated to the east side of the park. These may be at ground level or placed atop a parking deck constructed to provide additional parking for the performing arts center and the new out-parcel development (see map at right).

■ **Increase circulation and connectivity within block.** Existing conditions make it very difficult to get from one point to another on the municipal block. Whether in a car or on foot, there is no easy way to get around without entering a heavily-trafficked roadway or walking without a direct path. Therefore, the City should open up the block with small, low-speed east-west and north-south streets to connect the block internally. These streets should feature on-street parking and sidewalks to allow both easy access to specific sites as well as mobility throughout the block as a whole. The main east-west street features a landscaped “traffic square” featuring the relocated historic house as a visible landmark.

■ **Provide outparcel development on Exeter Road frontage.** Newly-striped extensive on-street parking along both sides of Exeter Road can provide the GPAC with additional parking, allowing a portion of the Exeter Road frontage to be developed as small mixed-use buildings, whose daytime parking needs can be shared with the arts centre’s evening and weekend events. The sale of this small land parcel or rent of the buildings can provide a source of income to the City.

■ **Formalize public space and art on the block.** In addition to the new public streets, a series of new and improved public spaces should be created as the City redevelops the municipal block. For

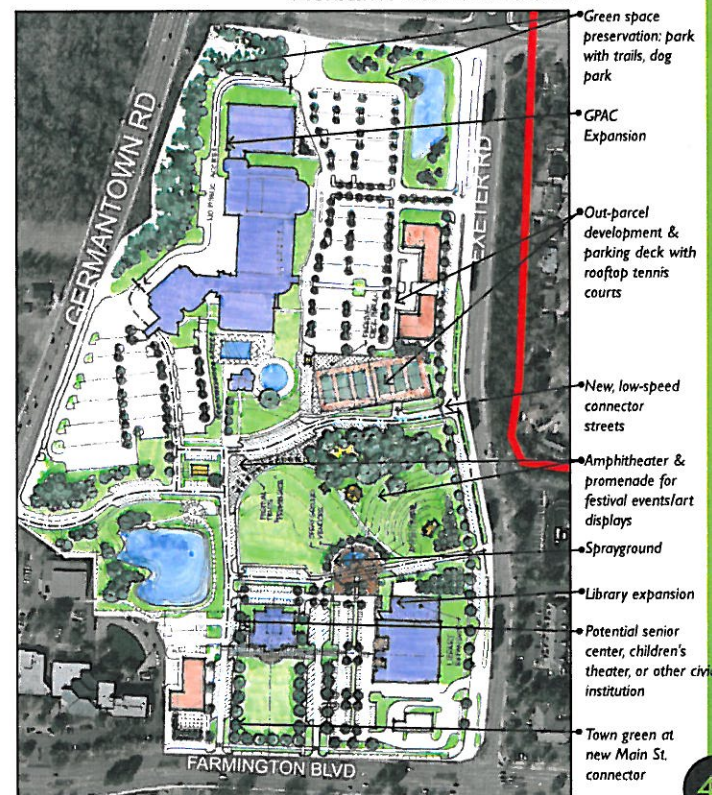
instance, dedicating space for a dog park in the northwest, wooded corner of the block creates a specific destination and activity to attract users. Other examples of destinations include a sprayground fountain for children, a public promenade along the main east-west street together with a new amphitheater immediately north of the library, and a designated picnic area. While the block already contains some of these features, the City should continue to formalize such places in order to define the block’s character as a public amenity. Centrally located, this venue could host public events throughout the year and in conjunction with the library and arts centre.

The small promenade area along the east-west street would create a place for vendors to set up during special events or, alternatively, to host rotating public art displays. The inclusion of public art throughout the entire block would fit well with the arts centre and enhance the block’s appeal as a cultural destination. Sculptures, seasonal displays, and interactive exhibits are some of the many ideas the City could pursue.

Lastly, the plan recommends developing a town green located at the northern terminus of the new Main Street. The most suitable location for this space is on the existing post office site, where the current building is too small for the service’s growing needs. The multiple redevelopment opportunities within the study area provide opportunities for further study regarding moving the post office to an improved central location. This space, which would also connect to the front entrance of the library would offer residents, who persistently lamented the lack of an identifiable center during the charrette, a place in which to gather and identify.

Various events, festivals, and celebrations could be hosted here, including those in partnership with the library, Performing Arts Centre, and other civic functions. Importantly, the green opens up the library to a more prominent, public presence overlooking a major City feature. In addition, the City should consider adding another, complementary civic institution on the green’s northern side. Possible uses include: a children’s theatre, senior center, or other appropriate type. For many years, cities the most prized institutions in places of prominence. This idea reinforces that notion, giving the library, adjacent buildings, and the block as a whole a sense of purpose and place.

MUNICIPAL BLOCK OPTION A



MUNICIPAL BLOCK OPTION B

Option B

■ **General design concepts.** The second alternative provides a radically different set of options for the City, involving selling the existing City hall site for residential and mixed-use development and constructing a new City hall along Exeter Road. In this option, the post office and library are upfitted on their existing sites, and the east-west cross street moves slightly to the north, with a more direct line across the site in order to maximize the redevelopment potential of the town hall corner site, and to accommodate a new civic building for the children's theater at the edge of the landscaped lake. This new landscaped space links with a more formally redesigned park and new amphitheater to provide a connected suite of public spaces.

In this scheme, the tennis courts are relocated with other tennis facilities elsewhere in the City, and a new City hall is constructed along Exeter Road, with shared daytime / evening parking with the performing arts center. As in Option A, on-street parking along both sides of Exeter Road also provides additional parking capacity.

■ **Redevelop existing City Hall site.** The City hall site provides the opportunity to create a series of new City blocks to relate to and extend the new urban structure of the redeveloped "superblock" immediately to the south. A new north-south street links Farmington Road with the new east-west street across the block, with a second east-west street skirts the southern edge of the small lake and connects with the post office parking lot and access street back to Farmington Road. New townhomes front onto this lake and its associated park landscape, creating a prestigious new "address" in the center of the City.

The corner of Germantown and Farmington Roads is redeveloped with higher-density mixed-use buildings, primarily offices and

apartments with some convenience retail, served by a mid-block parking deck screened by buildings on all sides. The triangular block formed by Germantown Road and the two new local streets is lined with townhomes, offices facing Germantown Road and a corner apartment building, all with parking beneath or behind the buildings. Supplementary parking is provided by the capacity of the deck on the adjacent block. On street parking along Farmington Road adds to the short-stay, convenience parking capacity of the immediate vicinity.



A path through a public park





The Municipal Block

The images on this page represent a sampling of pictures taken at great public places across the country. Displayed are features such as fountains, public art and interactive experiences, open space, and places for people to gather. These attractions help to create a sense of place and community by defining and celebrating the public realm. The Smart Growth Plan recommends these features and others for the City of Germantown's Municipal Block redevelopment.

NEW TOWN GREEN & LIBRARY



Before



After

The western edge of the study area contains a large parcel ripe for development, with active development interest. This site, known as the Arthur Tract, represents another development opportunity with strong place-making potential. Several alternatives exist regarding the property's future, however, not all of these scenarios appropriately reflect the City's 2020 Vision.

The area is presently zoned O-C for "Office Campus", meaning that it is geared towards single-use, large office functions. Under these conditions, a typical build-out scenario would include a few large, generic buildings surrounded by parking lots and accessible only by car. Mobility within and out of the complex would be limited, most likely exacerbating conditions on the crowded Poplar Avenue and West Street. To meet the goals of the 2020 Vision Plan, this plan proposes an alternative concept that incorporates office space as well as numerous other commercial, civic, and residential uses into a coherent urban form. This plan more appropriately reflects the City's commitment to vibrant yet sustainable growth. Suggestions are summarized as follows:

- **Encourage mixed-use development.** This includes multi-story buildings that mix uses and functions, with retail uses on the lower floors with office or residential spaces above. The mixed-use plan (bottom right) displays a retail capacity of 305,000 square feet. In addition, this plan also boasts 175,000 square feet of office space mixed-in with the other commercial uses. The "office campus" plan, however, only affords 500,000 square feet of single-use office space. In the mixed-use plan some of the larger buildings may house only one function (e.g. a movie theater), but their proximity to other uses helps employees, residents, and patrons combine trips. Overall, this can help reduce traffic congestion, stress, and environmental pollution.

- **Ensure multi-modal connectivity throughout property.** The design features broad sidewalks accompanied by low-speed streets with on-street parking in any plan for the tract. It is very important to incorporate adjacent parcels into this design opportunity to achieve the required connectivity. Benefits include: Safe-streets for pedestrians, cyclists, and cars; easy access to destinations; increased mobility; and reduced traffic congestion/pollution. On-street parking and well-placed decks provide adequate parking while giving pedestrians and stores streetfront priority.

- **Design public space into the layout.** As seen in the graphic, public parks (green) and plazas (purple) are significant components of the plan. The City should insist such features be included in any development. Well-designed public spaces foster community and charge a place with identity. Public art should be included as part of the process.

- **Include a range of housing options.** Townhomes, condos, patio homes, and apartments offer residential choices to every segment of the population. Affordable and practical, they allow empty nesters to downsize and remain active, or young professionals to live in town before owning a larger home. Plus, they add a built-in population essential to support a vibrant urban life. The mixed-use plan (bottom right) incorporates nearly 300 housing units into the site plan (215 apartments, 70 townhomes). These residential types would further augment the supply of diverse housing in Germantown, enabling the City to target various segments across the demographic spectrum. Under the "office campus" plan, no potential housing opportunities exist.



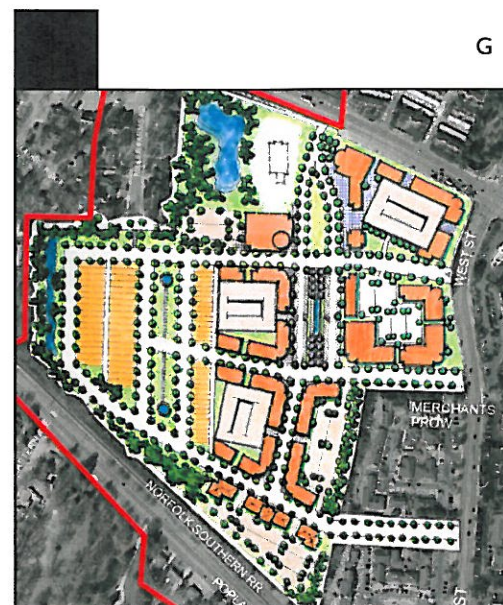
Site Plan based on Current O-C Zoning



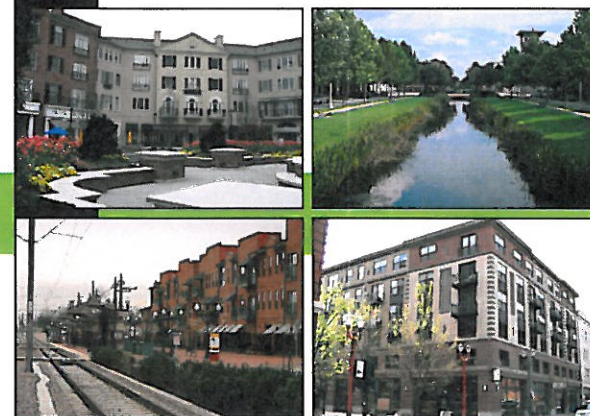
Preferred Conceptual Build-Out as a Mixed Use Center



Axonometric rendering of Town Center West



Preferred conceptual Build-Out as a mixed use center



Precedent images

Bordering the municipal block on its western and northern sides, the two properties known together as the “Owen Tract” offer significant opportunities to enhance the Smart Growth Plan’s vision. The following development principles apply to both properties:

- **Encourage mixed-use development.** The City should promote a blend of uses, keeping in mind both the nearby residential areas and the heavily-trafficked Germantown Road. Near the road, development should focus on street-fronting commercial interests such as offices with perhaps a small amount of retail on the western portion. Such buildings could easily contain apartments or condominiums on their upper floors. Where both properties abut existing residential development, new proposals should include single-family lots to act as a transition.
- **Retain landscape and tree mass as entry feature to town center.** A tree buffer should be maintained on both properties to create a special sense of entry into the City as opposed to standard solution of clear cutting and stripping out the property, which would be in flagrant contradiction to the place-making goals of the 2020 Vision Plan.
- **Promote connectivity.** A well-connected street network increases both accessibility and safety for cars and pedestrians. This is important given the residential nature of the surrounding areas.
- **Incorporate public space into the design.** The City should advocate for public spaces such as pocket parks, wide sidewalks, and public art features (fountains, statues) in the designs.



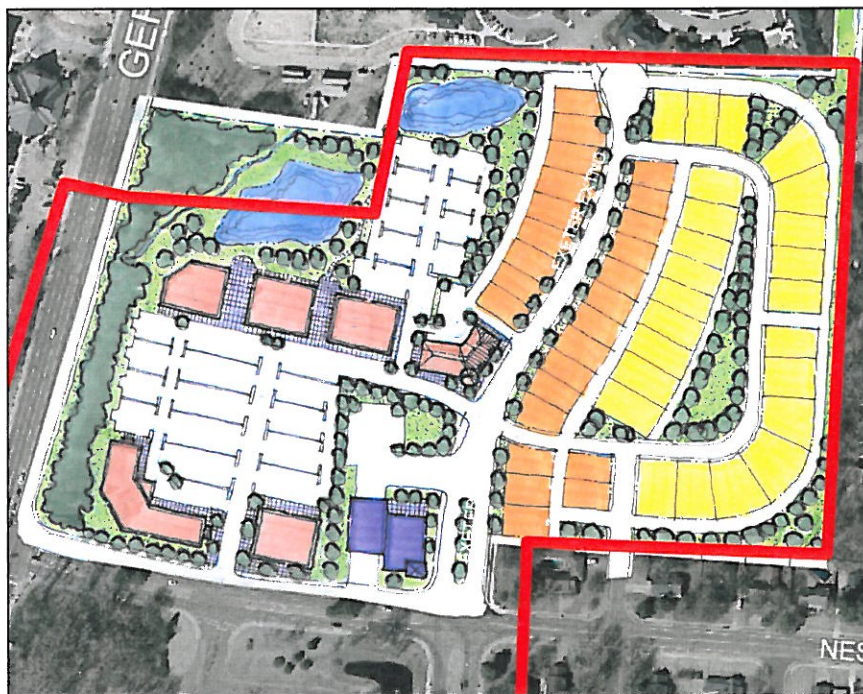
OwenTract-Germantown Rd.Version B: Large lot single-family, more mixed-use buildings

With specific reference to the northern site fronting Neshoba Road, the following additional provisions apply:

- **Emphasize block's residential character.** Because of its location adjacent to existing housing and to elderly persons' accommodation, this block will best support a mix of housing types as its primary use. The City should use the opportunity to increase housing diversity by encouraging small-lot single-family homes and townhomes, thus increasing population in the central area while providing easy access to local destinations.
- **Allow small-scale commercial development.** This property would be a suitable location for specialized medical office spaces or other more generic office uses fronting onto Neshoba Road.
- **Reserve space for a fire station.** During the charrette the Fire Chief expressed the need to re-locate to a larger facility. Due to the station's high I.S.O. rating, the new facility must remain close to the current station site. The Owen-Neshoba property satisfies these requirements.



Fire Station, Cornelius, NC



Owen Tract-Neshoba Rd. Alternative A: Single-family & townhomes with medical offices & fire station (purple)



Owen Tract-Neshoba Rd. Alternative B: Single-family & townhomes with mixed-use buildings & fire station

Strategically located at the intersection of Poplar Ave. and Exeter Road, the Kroger site provides travelers with a first impression of the Main Street area. Currently, that first glance is dominated by generic, over-sized parking lots. Changes can be made, however, to improve the site's economic performance and aesthetic appeal and in concert with Poplar Avenue improvements, create a fitting entry into the Main Street:

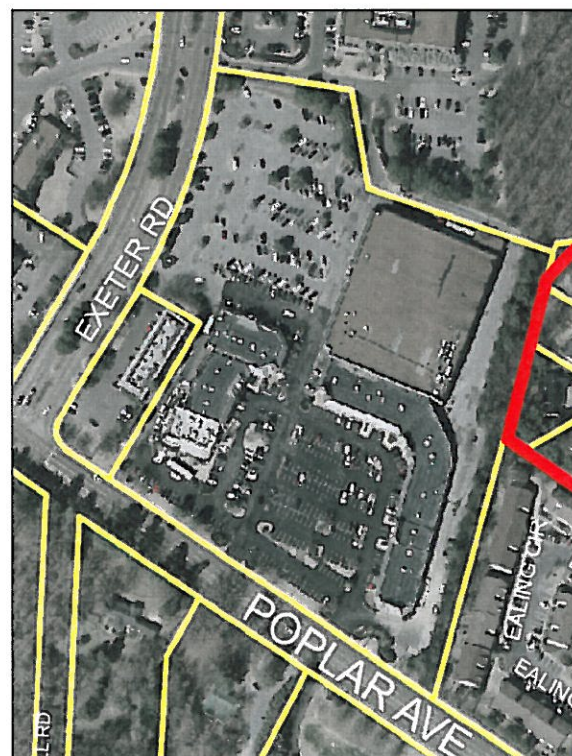
- **Develop street-fronting buildings over existing surface parking lots.** The existing conditions allow for relatively inexpensive re-development of the large, half-vacant parking lots. The City should encourage out-parcel development on these lots and emphasize the need for buildings that line the street. Attractive, pedestrian-oriented stores and businesses should be placed along Exeter Road and Poplar Avenue. These street-facing, multi-story buildings give context clues to drivers that they are entering the City's downtown area. As a result, drivers tend to slow down in order to take in the stores and watch for pedestrians.

Both the City and property owners can increase their tax revenue and profits significantly with relatively little effort. The concept to the right illustrates the redesign of the site using the existing parking facilities. Not only does this approach minimize infrastructure costs, but it also increases the land area available for development. The new buildings attract more customers to the block while parking is efficiently shared between businesses. Moreover, mixed-use commercial/residential buildings would permit employees and patrons to use parking during the day while leaving the spaces available for resident use at night. Ultimately, this design promotes a more economically-profitable, sustainable land-use pattern.

- **Re-stripe Exeter for reverse-angle, on-street parking.** As stated earlier, Exeter Road has more capacity than it needs to serve current or projected traffic volumes. Adding on-street parking allows the roadway to meet these needs while serving as more than just an automobile conduit. Ancillary benefits include: Easy access to proposed street-fronting buildings; increased parking capacity using existing infrastructure; minimal cost implementation; enhanced safety for pedestrians, cyclists, and drivers; and a more attractive storefront environment. Taken together, these features make reverse-angle on-street parking an effective, affordable enhancement.

- **Connect site to neighboring uses.** Keeping with the area's emerging urban form, the City should ensure multi-modal connectivity throughout the block. For instance, the City might create a lighted bike/foot path between the site and the adjacent neighborhoods to give residents the chance to exercise on the way to the grocery store—all without using a car or taking up a parking space. These alternatives should be used in conjunction with proposed measures to increase access and connectivity throughout the central area (slow-speed streets, alleys, etc.)

Existing Conditions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 134,000 sq. ft. of commercial space ■ Large, under-utilized parking lots ■ No residential connections
Re-designed Kroger Site
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 160,000 sq. ft. office/retail/commercial space ■ Residential units could be added above new development ■ Shared parking facilities & on-street parking on Exeter to allow easy access to buildings ■ Non-motorized path connecting site to surrounding neighborhoods



Existing Kroger Site



Existing Conditions: Half-Empty Parking Lots



Kroger Site Re-Design Scenario

Centrally located in Germantown, the Saddle Creek and Germantown Hardware blocks represent key opportunities to connect the central commercial and municipal blocks with Town Center West to create a coherent, attractive and commercially vibrant downtown. The conceptual redesign of these two blocks continues the Main Street area's emerging urban character and provides a fitting sense of arrival into the center of the City. Therefore, the following recommendations apply:

- **Increase connectivity.** One main difference between the existing conditions and the conceptual rendering relates to the blocks' internal connectedness. Currently, there are no mid-block crossings or ways through either block. In addition, many entrances on the Hardware block are not defined well, leaving patrons or visitors confused as to how to navigate the site. To improve conditions for pedestrians and cars alike, the City should encourage slow-speed streets throughout the block. Ultimately, this design moves more traffic while fostering an atmosphere conducive to pedestrian movement and gathering.

- **Encourage street-fronting development.** Presently, large parking lots surround many of the buildings on these blocks. This design makes access difficult, particularly for pedestrians, and also reinforces auto-dependency between adjacent destinations. With the proposed street network, new opportunities for street-fronting and corner real estate abound. The City should encourage buildings to abut the street directly and to maintain considerable ground floor window space. This pattern creates an attractive environment for pedestrians, further promoting the central City's urban appeal.

- **Develop at higher densities.** For some of these changes to occur, the City will need to develop at higher densities with opportunities to pursue innovative development projects new to Germantown. Some of the buildings may be multi-storied and contain a mix of uses. While the lower floors provide retail and office space, the upper floors could house various urban living experiences--anything from lofts to apartments to condominiums. The blend of uses cultivates a vibrant atmosphere throughout the day as the residential population provides the critical mass necessary to support local dining and entertainment establishments.

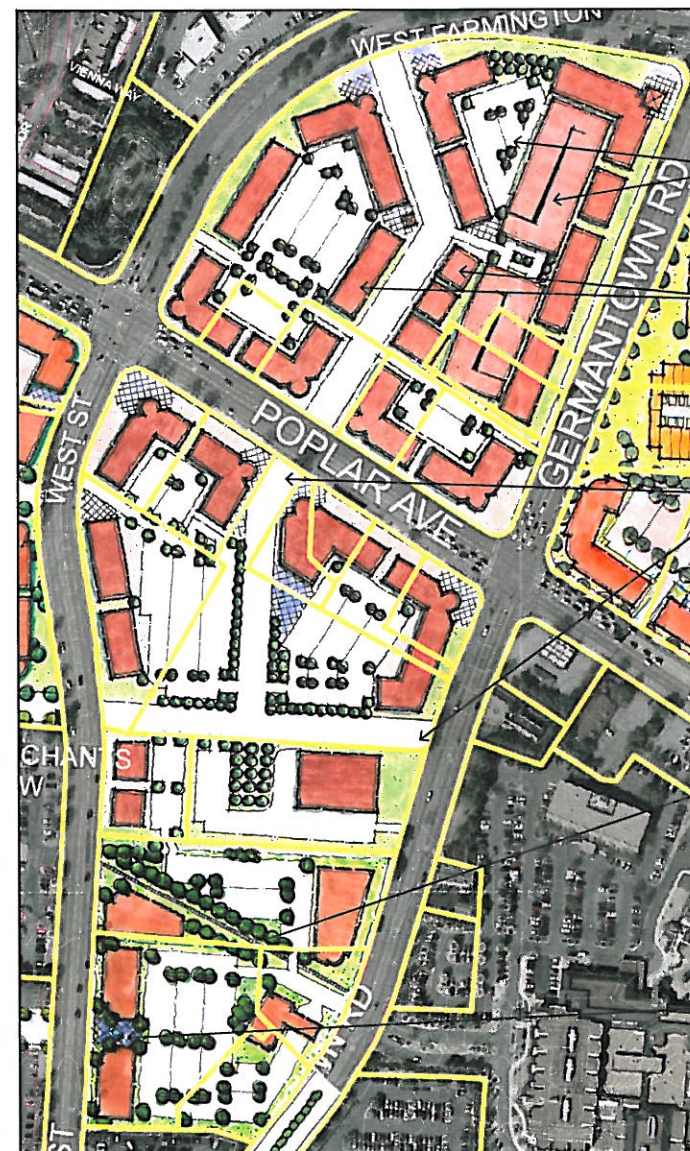
- **Incorporate public space into re-design plans.** The blocks' existing conditions reveal a lack of usable public space. While some features do exist (fountain at Saddle Creek), no public gathering place exists. The inclusion of wide sidewalks, public art, cafes with outdoor seating, and perhaps a few small plazas tucked into new development will help create meaningful places within the blocks and provide attractive destinations for meeting with friends and fellow citizens.



Existing conditions: Vast parking lots Germantown Hardware site



Existing Conditions: Germantown Hardware Block & Saddle Creek



Germantown Hardware Block & Saddle Creek Re-Design

Concealed surface parking lots & parking decks

Street-fronting buildings

Low-speed connector streets

Pedestrian pathway between West Street & Germantown Methodist Hospital

Public spaces & plazas (shown in purple throughout)

Numerous smaller-scale opportunities exist throughout the study area for implementing the plan's vision. Ranging in size and type, these projects can each have a positive impact on Germantown's built environment and community life. Recommendations are as follows:

Poplar Pike Infill Site

- *Preserve the residential character and increase housing diversity.* Given the surrounding conditions, the plan recommends a small neighborhood. Townhomes could be inserted along Poplar Pike. Alternatively, small-scale commercial could work in this location (Option B).

- *Include public space.* The site's pond offers a wonderful opportunity to form a neighborhood park for use by local residents and to confer extra value on the residential properties that face onto it.

Poplar Pike-West Street Corner

- *Reflect Old Germantown character with small-scale offices, boutiques, and service retail facing the streets.* This corner extends the historic area's influence across the railroad tracks.

- *Expand existing housing diversity.* This quiet townhome enclave (in orange) complements the site's existing well-designed townhome complex located around a small green.

Exeter Road - West Farmington Entrance

- *Design buildings to be street-fronting.* The City should extend the central commercial block's urban form to this area, creating a definitive entranceway into the town center. Buildings should be pedestrian-oriented with large ground floor windows and wide sidewalks to encourage walking and browsing.

West Street - Germantown Road Infill

- *Promote street-fronting development.* Pedestrian-scaled buildings that directly face the street will help encourage slower traffic and walkability in this heavily congested area. Given the proximity of the medical center and its workday population, the area has great potential to be a highly walkable district if other features are designed accordingly.

- *Construct a pedestrian and bicycle path between West Street and the medical center.* This path would enable employees and others in and around the medical center to run errands or grab lunch by walking or cycling. It also anticipates Town Center West's development just five minutes away across West Street.



Poplar Pike Infill Option A



Poplar Pike Infill Option B



Exeter-West Farmington Entrance



Poplar Pike-West Street Corner



West Street-Germantown Road Infill